

# The Tsunami

## How *Ilm-e-Khshnoom* unravels the truth behind 'natural disasters'

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### ***Introduction***

The recent Tsunami that hit Southeast Asia and India caused large-scale destruction and the loss of over 200,000 human lives. Global aid agencies and the media have described this incident as one of the worst 'natural disasters' in recent times. Quite a few individuals have explained the phenomenon as 'nature striking back'. The occurrence of the Tsunami and the effects of its devastation triggered a loss of faith in a number of religiously inclined people, and paradoxically caused some secular minded persons to start praying. Authorities from across the religious as well as the secular spectrum have tried to analyse and logically explain the cause of this calamity. This essay attempts to shed light on the incident through the knowledge of *Ilm-e-Khshnoom* or Zoroastrian mysticism.

### ***The intellectual limitations of man***

The workings of nature are beyond the comprehension of man's intellectual prowess. The entire body of knowledge available to man, all his advances and conquests, his numerous explorations and experiments, past, present and future are all incapable of piercing the veil that nature has covered itself with. For most men (and women), nature can be experienced, but never revealed. Yet there exists a category of men (and women) for whom the veil of nature is lifted. These are the spiritual sages and adepts, known in Zoroastrian mysticism as the *Abeds*, who live in consonance with nature, who talk to nature, to whom nature reveals itself in all its splendorous beauty. Those few who are fortunate to come into contact with these Masters of the Heart (*Saheb-e-Dilan*) are taught the knowledge of understanding the workings of nature, which goes beyond the pale of modern science and its discoveries. Our discussions in this essay are based on the body of knowledge revealed by one such fortunate individual, *Ustad Saheb Behramshah Nowroji Shroff*, who came into contact and stayed with the *Abeds* of *Demavand* for a period of over three years at the end of the nineteenth century.

A basic understanding of how nature functions (subject to the limitation set out above) is an essential prerequisite to unravel the reasons for the cause of the Tsunami. Within the overall

working of nature, several sub-systems function, each interlinked with the other in a strong symbiotic relationship. A few relevant to our study are analysed below.

### **1. The creation of Activity-clouds [The *Gubar* principle]**

It was common for man to behave in an insular way, rarely thinking that his actions may affect someone far removed from him. Yet ongoing studies in ecosystem research have revealed the increasingly complex and symbiotic relationships between man and other creations and the intensely fragile state of the world's ecosystems. Behind this physical fact lies the spiritual principle of Activity-clouds. Unknown to man, every thought, word and deed of his is recorded in nature, and each such activity creates an Activity-drop. These drops agglomerate to form what are known as *Gubars*, or Activity-clouds. Every individual has his/her personal Activity-cloud, which is the cumulative effect of all his thoughts, words, and deeds. However, Activity-clouds are not confined merely to individuals. When any set of people come together for a particular purpose, their collective thoughts, words and deeds also create a collective Activity-cloud. Hence, a family unit, a team of players, an orchestra, and a company all would have their collective Activity-clouds. Similarly, every town, city, community, country and the whole world also have their collective Activity-clouds, which gather and hover over the earth's atmosphere.

The creation and functioning of Activity-clouds is very similar to the process of convection and heat transfer, which causes the evaporation of water from the seas, the formation of rain clouds, and the resultant rainfall. Due to the increasingly polluting nature of man's activities, large parts of the world experience what is known as acid rain, which causes severe harm and further degradation of the areas. In the same manner, the overall nature of the Activity-clouds attracts two very different spiritual agencies towards them. When the overall nature of the Activity-clouds is good, benign, or causing spiritual progress, they attract the attention of the Divine Munificence (technically called *Fasal*) which is drawn towards them. The merger of the Activity-clouds and the Divine Munificence causes good fortune and happiness to rain on those who created such Activity-clouds. Conversely, when the overall nature of the Activity-clouds is bad, evil, or causing spiritual regress, they attract the attention of malignant spirits, which impregnate the clouds with the seed of disease, destruction, and pestilence. (The cloud then being technically called '*Saen Druj Gubars*')The resultant cloudburst causes so-called 'natural calamities'.

## **2. The primal elements & their cosmic balance [Mizan-e Atash – Bad – Ab – Khak Anaser]**

The building blocks of all physical matter originate from the 4 primal elements, called *Anasers* – Atash (‘Fire’), Bad (‘Air’), Ab (‘Water’) and Khak (‘Earth’). We have purposely put the meaning within quotes to not confuse them with the physical elements bearing the same name. The physical elements we see are a result of the mixing of these four primal elements along with certain other ingredients. The four primal elements exist in every animate and inanimate object in a particular ratio or a cosmic balance, which is called *Mizan*. Thus, the physical water we see contains a preponderance of the Anaser Ab, along with minute traces of the other three Anasers, mixed together with other physical and ultra-physical ingredients. An alteration of the ratios of the composition of the primal elements in any object can result in the transmutation of the object into something else, either in a gradual manner or in an explosive reaction. This change can be brought about either by natural decay or sometimes by the specific intervention by man. The foundation for a ‘natural disaster’ is laid when the methodology of change is abused for short term or nefarious purposes.

## **3. The structure of the Cosmos and the place of earth within it [*Hasti – Nisti - Geti*]**

Zoroastrian mysticism has given a comprehensive idea of universal cosmology and the place of the earth within it. The cosmos is divided into 2 main universes, *Hasti* - the Immortal Universe (Av. *Haithyeng Asti*, Yasna 43.3) and *Nisti* - the Mundane Universe. *Hasti* is composed of nine Immortal Heavens arranged concentrically one over the other, made up entirely of Immortal Light and the Divine Munificence. Bridging the expanse between the Immortal and Mundane Universes lies the *Great Separator*, called *Mino Karko* (Av. *Miswane Gatu*) which contains within it the four Atmospheric Oceans (Av. *Zraya*). The Mundane Universe consists of seven planes or climes called *Dakhyu*. Each of these *Dakhyus* has several intervening sub-planes, and each of these sub-planes contains innumerable globes, like our own Earth. The top six *Dakhyus* are beyond human perception, but the seventh *Dakhyu* is perceivable and visible in the lower area. Our Earth, called *Geti*, is located somewhere on the second or third sub-plane of the last *Dakhyu*, called *Aipi Dakhyu*. Our earth is divided into 2 parts. Nearly two-thirds of the earth is perceptible to us and is populated by humans and our entire civilisation with its accompanying pollution. However, there exists a one-third part (Av. *Aiwithrishwa*) which is separated from the perceptible earth.

This area is free from the pollution of the visible world and is in direct contact with the higher Dakhyus and from there onto the Immortal Universe. Within this secluded dimension, exist the abodes of the advanced souls, the *Abeds*, saints, and sages of different religions who practice their spiritual kinetics far from the gaze and disturbance of man. The spiritual practices of these adepts draws down the Divine Munificence from the higher regions onto the earth (explained further below) and are the true reason for the existence of our civilisation.

#### **4. The population of the Cosmos [The *Zatanam* & *Azatanam* categories]**

The entire universe of souls can be broadly categorised into two groups – *Zatanam* and *Azatanam*. *Zatanam* refers to those souls who are born through the process of sexual reproduction, and largely consists of souls who are working towards their individual salvation through the help of the Divine Munificence and other helpers. *Azatanam* refers to those souls, which are born through the process of asexual reproduction, and consists of souls who have almost or nearly attained their individual salvation but have postponed their own salvation and work towards helping others achieve their own salvation. Several further divisions exist within these two broad categories.

#### **5. The cosmic machinery for the descent of Divine Blessings on earth**

The work of the spiritual entities which compose the entire Divine Government result in the production of different types of Divine Blessings, including the Divine Munificence (*Fasal*) and Spiritual Light (*Asere Roshni*). The output of this work is distributed throughout the entire cosmos through a grand and intricate machinery, the two main facets of which are known in the Avesta, allegorically, as the ‘*thousand pillared house of Sraosha*’ and the ‘*1001 tributaries of the Ardivisur river.*’ The descent of the Divine Munificence from the Immortal Universe (*Hasti*) to the lower regions, (including our earth) is channelled through the apparatus of the Yazata Sraosha. The divine blessings originating from different parts of the Mundane Universe (*Nisti*) are channelled further down through the agency of the Yazata Ava Ardivisur. With reference to man, the general rule is that blessings which relate to his spiritual advancement are channelled through the apparatus of the Yazata Sraosha, whereas the reactions arising out of his free will as well as destiny (explained later) are channelled down to him through the 1001 conduits of Ava Ardivisur.

## **6. The Fire energies of the Universe [*Atash*] & the classification of Divine Energy [*Khastar*]**

The fundamental force that drives the working of the Universe is known as *Atash* or *Athra*. (This is quite different from the physical fire, which we see.) The Zoroastrian mystic revelation explains that the entire universe functions through 16 different Fire Energies, or *Atash*. Of these 16, nine are located in the Immortal Universe (*Hasti*), whereas four originate in the Mundane Universe. The entire cosmos is run through the application of various Divine Energies, known as *Khastar*, which arise out of the interaction of the Fire Energies. There are 81 types of *Khastar*, 45 of which originate in the Immortal Universe (*Hasti*), whereas 36 are found in the Mundane Universe (*Nisti*). The 45 *Khastar* of *Hasti* are put to use by the *Yazatas* to further the plan of *Ahura Mazda*. Some of the 36 *Khastar* of *Nisti* can be replicated on the earth. The most common energy which man has so far uncovered is electricity, which is one of the lowest forms of the 36 *Khastar* of *Nisti*. The interaction between the 16 Fire Energies, the 45 *Khastar* of *Hasti* and the 36 *Khastar* of *Nisti* give rise to 6 different forms of Primal Attraction (explained further later), which are technically called *magnatis*, from which is derived the similar Greek word which is the basis for the modern term ‘magnetism’.

## **7. The creation of man’s destiny and its descent into his life**

The Zoroastrian mystical revelation gives as a fascinating glimpse into the creation of man’s destiny and its subsequent interaction with man during his life. The destiny of man can be broadly divided into 2 aspects: Immutable Destiny (*Tabai*) and Mutable Destiny (*Iradati*). The Immutable Destiny, known as *Tabai*, is that which man is born with and has no control over, for example, we are unable to choose which parents we were born from. Yet a larger part of man’s destiny can be changed by him due to his freedom of will. This is known as the *Iradati* destiny.

The alteration of the Mutable destiny can be driven by two engines: Enlightened Choice (*Roshan Fel*), and Sensory Choice. (See table below) When a man is guided by the teachings of his religion and its Prophet and by the complete and unflinching application of all the religious commandments to his life, he is said to have followed the path of Enlightened Choice. The follower of the Enlightened Choice keeps his senses under strict control and leads a life of truth and piety. Despite being knowledgeable, he remains humble. He acknowledges that there is more to the universe than he can perceive. He abhors the misuse

of science and technology for short term or monetary gains. Such a path leads him to the creation of a worthy and good destiny, which not results in his own progress but takes the entire creation forward.

However, more often than not, man alters his Mutable Destiny by taking the option of Sensory Choice, that is, he is guided in his choices by his five physical senses, which invariably draw him into a web of passion. He disregards the teachings of his religion and allows the temptation of short-term monetary and sensory gains to dilute his principles and ethics. He believes that his limited senses have the ability to completely understand the workings of nature. His knowledge of physical sciences and modern technology breeds in him an ego, which shuts off all other dissenting views. He believes that man has understood all that there is in the universe, that man has ‘conquered’ nature, the weather, and the seasons. Such persons abuse the technological advances to create grave disturbances in nature’s working in their feeble attempts to play God. The follower of this path alters his mutable destiny in a way that not only retards his own ultimate progress, but also causes severe strain on the cosmic infrastructure. This in turn sets off a series of cause-effect conundrums, which lead to the creation of an Activity Cloud of a sinister nature. This evil-attracting Activity is then impregnated by the negative forces with the seeds of future destruction and calamity.

***The destiny of man***

<b>Mutable destiny (<i>Tabai</i>)</b>	<b>Immutable destiny (<i>Iradiati</i>)</b>	
<b>The destiny one is born with and over which one has no control</b>	<b>Destiny that can be changed by man’s choice, which can be of two types</b>	
	<b>Enlightened Choice</b>	<b>Sensory Choice</b>
	<b>Walks the path shown by the religion</b>	<b>Walks his own path</b>
	<b>Spiritual senses control the mind</b>	<b>Physical senses govern the mind</b>
	<b>Mind controls the body</b>	<b>Body controls the mind</b>
	<b>Thinks long-term &amp; holistic</b>	<b>Thinks short-term &amp; selfish</b>
	<b>Generates good destiny</b>	<b>Generates bad destiny</b>
	<b>Progresses spiritually</b>	<b>Regresses spiritually</b>

	<b>Creates positive Activity-clouds</b>	<b>Creates negative Activity-clouds</b>
	<b>Attracts Divine Munificence</b>	<b>Attracts malignant spirits</b>
	<b>Causes others to progress spiritually</b>	<b>Causes negative cloud-burst, 'natural disasters'</b>
	<b>Takes entire creation forward</b>	<b>Causes regression of others</b>
		<b>Becomes an impediment to salvation</b>

## 8. The Cosmic Cohesion & factors disturbing its coherence

The efficient functioning of nature depends on the smooth coherence between its various sub-systems. The 15 Fire Energies, 81 Khastar, 4 Anasers, and their resultant 6 Primal Attractions (*magnatis*) all function on an intricate Cosmic Balance (*Mizan*). The six Primal Attractions consist of the following:

1. *Magnatis-e-Atash* (M1): the Primal Attraction caused by the Atash Anaser
2. *Magnatis-e-Bad* (M2): the Primal Attraction caused by the Bad Anaser
3. *Magnatis-e-Ab* (M3): the Primal Attraction caused by the Ab Anaser
4. *Magnatis-e-Khak* (M4): the Primal Attraction caused by the Khak Anaser
5. *Magnatis-e-Afsungari-e-haft rang-e-zaman* (M5): the Primal Attraction which brings down the effects of the celestial bodies on the earth
6. *Magnatis-e-Ahunavar* (M6): the beatific Primal Attraction, which brings down the Divine Munificence (*Fasal*) and Divine Blessings from the Immortal Universe.

The first four *magnatis* powers work with the fifth power (which draws down the celestial effects onto earth) in a symbiotic relationship, all five working under the guidance and supervision of the *Magnatis-e-Ahunavar*. Thus, there exists a very delicate and intricate balance between these six Primal Attractions themselves, wherein they all work in unison for the advancement of the universe. However, man's actions today, far from advancing the plan of the Lord, are very suited for his own selfish and short-term interests. This rapacious attitude causes a situation to arise, which threatens to disturb the Cosmic Coherence. It may happen that due to the actions of man, the first four *magnatis* powers, which all work together with M5, separate and start forming equations with M5 independent of M1, M2, M3, and M4.

Hence, instead of a situation where  $M1+M2+M3+M4+M5$  in a certain proportion bring peace and stability, an independent (but unsustainable) equation, say  $M1+M5$ , or  $M2+M3+M5$  etc. may appear. At this time, the *Magnatis-e-Ahunavar*, which is the most sublime and peace bringing attraction since it draws down the blessings of the Lord Himself, steps in and repairs the slight disturbance in the Divine Cohesion. Thus, even when man's actions cause the balance to be disturbed and threaten a reaction from the *magnatis* powers, (which is based on the Illat & Malul Principle enumerated above) the supervising M6 steps in, and in the spirit of the dictum – '*the Lord is Just, and the Lord is Merciful*', it draws away the destruction from areas of man's habitation, and causes the cloud burst of destruction to rain away in uninhabited areas, or over the seas.

However, there is a limit to the powers of correction of M6. When man's actions cross the threshold of tolerance, and cause great disturbance within the inter-working relationship of the first 5 magnatis powers, the ensuing reaction is of such intensity that even M6 cannot control its harsh effects. It is at this time that 'natural disasters' hit areas of human population and cause great death and destruction. The Tsunami of December 2004 is an apt example of the extent of destruction that man's selfish attitude can cause.

## **9. The trustee-ship nature & responsibility of man in the cosmic order**

Man occupies a pre-eminent position in the cosmic order. He has been given the unique power of speech as well as the freedom to do as he wills, though that freedom has been tempered by the repeated warnings of the prophets of all religions that man should not fall prey to the temptation of the physical senses. The progress of man is linked with the progress of the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms, of who he has been denoted as a trustee. When man walks the path of his religion, he takes along the entire creation with him. Conversely, when he abuses his trustee-ship position and exploits the bounty of nature for short-term purposes in a careless and irresponsible manner, he proves to be a cog in the entire cosmic machinery. It is therefore the bounden duty of man to bring responsibility into his thoughts, words, and deeds and to ensure that the creation of Activity-clouds is of a benign and worthy nature so that they can attract the *Magnatis-e-Ahunavar* and the Divine Munificence descending from Hasti and rain peace and prosperity on humanity.

## **10. The performance of *Yasna* as an aid to the cosmic machinery**



An important facilitator for the process of improving the Activity-clouds of man and reducing the ill effects of negative Activity-clouds is the performance of *Yasna*. *Yasna* is today understood in the narrow sense of rituals or ceremonies. Yet the Zoroastrian mystical revelation has shed much light on this highly abused constituent of the religion. The performance of the various *Yasna* prescribed in the religion result in the creation of unique Activity-clouds, which attract the attention of Super-Activity-Clouds (called *Kuniat*) formed from the performance of countless such *Yasna* by Master-Priests over thousands of years. The interaction of these two result in the descent of an abundance of Divine Munificence and Divine Blessings over the entire humanity. The performance of *Yasna* is therefore for the benefit of humanity and is not to be seen from a narrow or parochial view.

## **11. Conclusion and a look into the future**

In his endless search for comfort and a better so-called ‘quality of life’, man continues to degrade and abuse the vital forces and gifts of nature. In doing so, he is sowing the seeds of his own future devastation. As diseases of consumption and ‘lifestyle related disorders’ hit large areas of the world, we are entering the beginning of a period of intense destruction. The celestial influencers have arranged themselves in a manner that supports this assertion. The Tsunami of December 2004 is a wake-up call for the entire human race. The age of materialism has to give place to the age of spirituality. Our attempt in this essay has been to highlight points from the Zoroastrian mystical revelation to demonstrate that man cannot shirk from his responsibilities, and that ‘natural disasters’ are merely manmade-disasters coupled with monumental ignorance.

### **Primary source:**

“*The earthquake in Koyna*”: an editorial in the Parsi Avaz weekly written by Jehangir S. Chiniwalla dated 7<sup>th</sup> January 1968.